Mini-Lesson: Making Inferences

Berniece, 52

You always talking about your daddy but you ain’t never stopped to look at what his foolishness cost your mama. Seventeen years’ worth of cold nights and an empty bed. For what? For a piano? For a piece of wood? To get even with somebody? I look at you and you’re all the same. You, Papa Boy Charles, Wining Boy, Doaker, Crawley... you’re all alike. All this thieving and killing and thieving and killing. And what it ever lead to? More killing and more thieving. I ain’t never seen it come to nothing. People getting burned up. People getting shot. People falling down their wells. It don’t never stop.

1. Which word or phrase has the most loaded and/or ambiguous language? Write.
2. Find another place in the text that refers connects to this word, phrase, or idea. Write it down, with page number.
3. Make an inference. Connect what the word or phrase means in one passage with what it meant in a previous passage. Does it mean the same thing? Something different? How does the similar or different meaning add to our understanding of this passage?
4. How does this pattern or repeated idea help us understand what a character values or believes?

Boy Willie, 51

Now, I’m gonna tell you the way I see it. The only thing that make that piano worth something is them carvings Papa Willie Boy put on there. That’s what make it worth something. That was my great-grandaddy. Papa Boy Charles brought that piano into the house. Now, I’m supposed to build on what they left me.

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